学習院女子大学紀要第 18 号（平成 28 年 3 月 31 日発行・配布）の 71 ページ「水妖の誘惑―西洋と日本における」において、下記の通り誤りがありました。

お詫びの上、訂正させていただきます。

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The Seduction of the Water Sprites: The Femme Fatale in the West and in Japan

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Introduction

The femme fatale, i.e., the fatal woman (charming, seductive as well as dangerous), is a figure of fascination in a variety of legends, myths, folktales, literary works, and pictures. Different from ordinary women, she has power despite herself. She is not predictable or manageable.

In this paper, I especially deal with the femme fatale in the form of lethal water sprites in the west and in Japan. In each supernatural water-sprite narrative, a man encounters a lovely and benevolent woman and he is mesmerized by her, but once the man leaves her, she does not forgive his betrayal and kills him. For instance, they are the women named the sirens, the mermaids, Lamia, Circe, and Ondine, turning from a seductive to a destructive woman.

In dealing with these women, I will also refer to the works of English poet John Keats, in which he deals with the fatal sprites called Lamia and Circe, and the works of Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué and Jean Giraudoux in which they deal with the fatal sprites called Undine or Ondine. And then, from Japan, I will deal with the story of a water sprite which is one of a variety of Dojoji stories: *Kengaku no Soshi (Hidakagawa Soshi)*. In Dojoji stories, it is well-known that a woman becomes a great serpent after being betrayed by the man and kills him. This serpent is recognized as the symbol of discarded women's vice, lust, and grudge.

The Creatures of Death: The Siren and the Mermaid

One famous example of water sprites is the siren who seduces sailors with her irresistible songs. First the siren is half-human, half-bird; and then half-human, half-fish/serpent. No one can sail past their song unless he stops his ears. In the case of Odysseus in Homer's *Odyssey*, ignoring the advice by Circe, he sails within reach of the sirens' seduction. In spite of the peril, he ties himself to the ship's mast and hears the songs of the sirens which make him go into a blissful trance. His companions'

ears have been stopped with wax in order to let them steer the ship. Odysseus's deed enables him to escape from doom. His deed means that he can control the perils of nature.

The siren does not have to have a reason to destroy human beings' lives. We can say that the siren is another manifestation of the sea. In old times sailing was very dangerous, so if a ship is wrecked, it is due to the sea monsters, and the siren is supposed to be one of them. That is why the siren represents the negative phase of the sea, or nature.

Later the siren comes to be called a mermaid. She is related to the figure of the siren. If a mortal man is lured by her, he is destined to be pulled into the depths of the sea and drowned. The following painting (plate 1) entitled "Siren" is a famed one that many people remember as a mermaid. This painting is by British artist John William Waterhouse, one of the famous painters of the Pre-Raphaelite School. The mermaid's upper body is female one and her lower body is fish/serpent. Her hair is long which reminds us of serpents. Her mysterious and mesmerizing figure is fascinating.

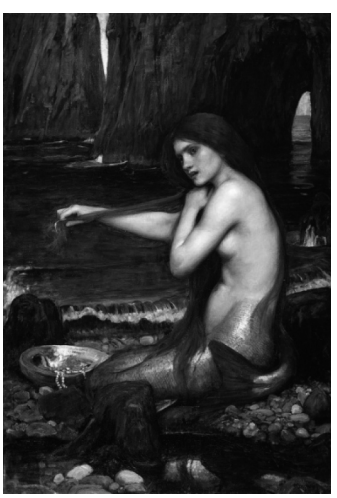

Plate 1　John William Waterhouse: "The Siren," 1900. Oil on canvas, 98 x 67 cm. Royal Academy of Arts.

The following painting (plate 2) entitled "The Depth of the Sea" by Edward Burne-Jones gives us an impression of fear as well as fascination. The young man in the painting appears unable to escape from the power of the mermaid. Strongly gripping his hands with her left and gripping his body with her right, the mermaid carries the man to the bottom of the sea. The serpentine twisting of her hair around his shoulder is worth noticing. At the same time the mermaid looks at us, the beholders,

smiling like the enigmatic Mona Lisa. Is this the smile of her victory? It is perplexing. The unknown man definitely is dragged to his death. Critics have seen this painting as a psychological exploration of fear, desire, and fatal attraction for the beholder.

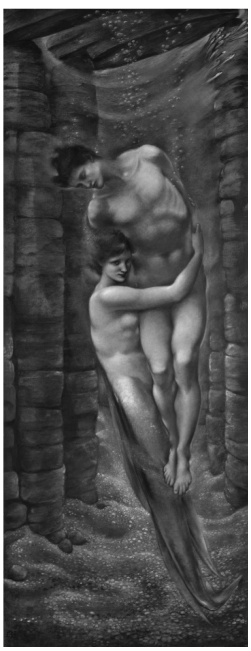

Plate 2 Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones: "The Depths of the Sea," 1887. Watercolor and gouache on wove paper mounted on panel, 197 x 76 cm. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum.

From ancient times, water has been considered the source and sustenance of life. Water has another side: it also has dangerous elements. Many disastrous accidents have occurred in the water realm: the sea, lakes, and rivers.

The Influence of Christianity

As times go on, as the power of Christianity increases, such water sprites have been regarded as heretical monsters who lure Christian men to destruction. The notion of the heretical siren remained popular among medieval Christians. As an allegory of vice, the siren had been carved as sculptures in churches and cloisters as examples. The sculptures demonstrate their lustful danger. That means that those who allow themselves to be seduced by the charms of these heretical monsters will meet a bad end. In medieval Christianity, the tempting words of the sirens were regarded as witches' songs and promised spiritual destruction. The siren was regarded as the heretic who seduces good Christians, and she is the symbol of secular pleasure and concupiscence. The siren is also the incarnation of nature, and that

means that in Christianity the siren should be suppressed and controlled.

John Keats's Femme Fatale

The femme fatale experienced a boom in eighteenth-century England. Poet John Keats was among those who depicted mysterious water sprites.

Keats's "Lamia" is in *Lamia, Isabella, The Eve of St. Agnes and Other Poem* (1820). Keats is one of the best-known poets like his contemporaries Percy Bysshe Shelley, William Wordsworth, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge of the Romantic School in England.

In the poem, Lamia is a mysterious serpent-woman. Lycius is a young philosopher. In an earlier section of the poem, Lamia transforms herself into a beautiful seductress who ensnares Lycius by means of her magical craft. Gaining a soul is not her purpose. She falls deeply in love with him. Lycius is attracted by her beauty and a gorgeous house created by her magic. In marriage, Lycius proposes a wedding party, but Lamia does not want one lest her real identity as a serpent is exposed. On the condition that Lycius not invite his master Apollonius, Lamia finally accepts Lycius's proposal, but on the day of the party, Apollonius appears before them. The sage Apollonius has exposed Lamia's real existence. As a result of this, Lamia vanishes. That night, Lycius dies in his wedding robe.

> "Fool!" said the sophist, in an under-tone
> Gruff with contempt; which a death-nighing moan
> From Lycius answer'd, as heart-struck and lost,
> He sank supine beside the aching ghost.
> "Fool! Fool!" repeated he, while his eyes still
> Relented not, nor mov'd; "from every ill
> "Of life have I preserv'd thee to this day,
> "And shall I see thee made a serpent's prey?
> Then Lamia breath'd death breath; the sophist's eye,
> Like a sharp spear, went through her utterly,
> Keen, cruel, perceant, stinging: she, as well
> As her weak hand could any meaning tell,
> Motion'd him to be silent; vainly so,
> He look'd and look'd again a level—No!
> "A Serpent!" echoed he; no sooner said,

Than with a frightful scream she vanished:
And Lycius' arms were empty of delight,
As were his limbs of life, from that same night.
On the high couch he lay!—his friends came round—
Supported him—no pulse, or breath they found,
And, in its marriage robe, the heavy body wound.[1]

Apollonius has exposed Lamia's illusion in the end. But Lamia just disappears, and it does not necessarily mean that she is dead. She might be somewhere. Lamia is an heretical existence, and Apollonius is a Christian. Basically Christians do not admit heretics. Apollonius is like a medieval Japanese monk who performs exorcism to destroy monstrous creatures.

In Greek mythology, Lamia was a beautiful princess of Libya. But because she was loved by the god Zeus, she was avenged by his wife, the goddess Hera, who stole Lamia's children and transformed her into an evil monstrous creature. Crazy Lamia becomes a ghoul who eats children every night.

On the other hand, according to Edward Topsell in *The History of Four-footed Beasts* (1607), "The word Lamia has various meanings. Sometimes one makes of it an animal of Libya, sometimes a fish, sometimes a specter or an apparition of women called fairies."[2] Topsell also regards them as vampires or nymphomaniacs, who may take their pleasures from young men, and then later destroy them.[3]

Keats's Lamia has two faces: A pure and innocent mortal virgin as well as a goddess of death and destruction. The storyline of Bram Stoker's The Lair of the White Worm, Oliver Wendell Holmes's Elsie Venner, and Vernon Lee's "Prince Alberic and the Snake Lady" are similar to "Lamia."

The following painting (plate 3) is Isobel Lilian Gloag's "The Kiss of the Enchantress." This painting is inspired by Keats's poem "Lamia." The painting shows an embrace between a female creature with the tail of a serpent and a knight. On the bank of a river, the knight succumbs to the mysterious and scary creature's embrace. Her right hand, her coiling tail and hair and the encircling thorny briars prove that he cannot run away from her.

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[1] John Keats, "Lamia," Part II, 291-311.
[2] Gillian M. E. Alban, *Melusine the Serpent Goddess in A. S. Byatt's Possession and in Mythology*, p.96.
[3] See Gillian M. E. Alban, *Melusine the Serpent Goddess in A. S. Byatt's Possession and in Mythology*, p.96.

Plate 3　Isobel Lilian Gloag (1865-1917): "The Kiss of the Enchantress." Also known as "The Knight and the Mermaid." c. 1890. Watercolor, 62 x 32 cm. Private collection.

In Japan's case, the love story of a man and an incarnation of a snake reminds us of "Jaisei no In (The Lust of the White Serpent)" in Ueda Akinari's supernatural tales, *Ugetsu Monogatari or Tales of Moonlight and Rain* (1768). The protagonist has an erotic encounter with a woman who later turns out to be a serpent and disappears.

Endymion (1818), based on the Greek myth of the same name, is John Keats's long poem, which contains the story of Glaucus, the fisherman who is attracted by the sea-nymph Scylla in Book III.[4] Scylla is the object of his desire, but it is difficult for him to get closer to her because on seeing him she always runs away. That is why Glaucus seeks the aid of Circe in his desire for the love of Scylla, but instantly Circe falls in love with him. Circe successfully tempts him.

Circe is an immortal witch in Greek mythology. In the original myth, she has a serpent's head and a dog's feet. Because of her ugly appearance, it is said that Circe waits at a hidden reef and drags men into the sea. In Homer's *Odyssey*, Circe is depicted as the one who changed Odysseus's companions into swine.

In Keats's story, Circe transforms herself into a beautiful maiden and uses her fatal power to be attracted by Glaucus.

[4] Keats knew this tale from George Sandy's translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

"Who could resist? Who in this universe?
She [Circe] did so breathe ambrosia; so immerse
My fine existence in a golden clime.
She took me like a child of suckling time,
And cradled me in roses. Thus condemn'd,
The current of my former life was stemm'd,
And to this arbitrary queen of sense
I bow'd a tranced vassal: nor would thence
Have mov'd, even though Amphion's harp had woo'd
Me back to Scylla o'er the billows rude.
For as Apollo each eve doth devise
A new appareling for western skies;
So every eve, nay every spendthrift hour
Shed balmy consciousness within that bower.
And I was free of haunts umbrageous;
Could wander in the mazy forest-house
Of squirrels, foxes shy, and antler'd deer,
And birds from coverts innermost and drear
Warbling for very joy mellifluous sorrow—
To me new born delights! [5]

Actually Circe is a dangerous sorceress who turned any man who approached her into a beast. Discovering that Circe has changed her former lovers into beasts, Glaucus runs off scared.[6] Angry Circe catches him and transforms him into an old man with white hair, and he is doomed to be under the sea for a thousand years. A thousand years later, Endymion appears and releases Glaucus. Glaucus talks about his story to Endymion. For him eventually it takes a thousand years, but there is salvation at the end of the story.

The following painting (plate 4) is by John William Waterhouse entitled "Circe Invidiosa" (1892). The painting depicts Circe poisoning the water to make Scylla a monster.

[5] John Keats, *Endymion*, Book III, 452-471.
[6] The situation is similar to Izumi Kyoka's *Koyahijiri*.

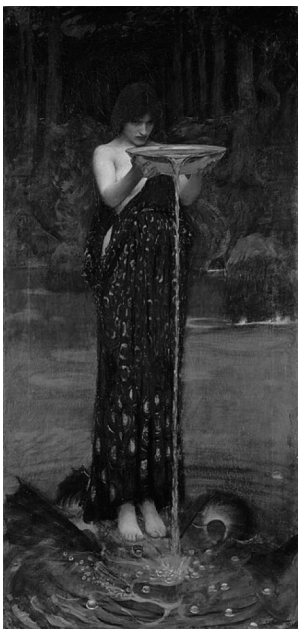

Plate 4　John William Waterhouse: "Circe Invidiosa," 1892. Oil on canvas, 180.7 × 87.4 cm. The Art Gallery of South Australia.

Friedrich de la Morte Fouque's *Undine*

The heroine Undine is one of the water-sprites. Originally the name is from the 16th-century Swiss alchemist and physician Paracelsus's Liber de Nymphis. In the German Friedrich de la Morte Fouque's *Undine* (1811), Undine is desirous of obtaining a human soul, and to obtain one she attempts to marry a mortal male, changing from water-sprite form to human form.[7] Undine and the young knight named Huldbrand von Ringstetten fall in love, but gradually he loses interest in her. Undine has to kill her lover with her deadly kiss when she is betrayed by him, who leaves her and takes another. The curse she has placed on him takes effect. He dies while she loses her memory of him and she returns to her watery element (See plate 5).

Fouque's *Undine* inspired French Jean Giraudoux, whose play *Ondine* was staged in Paris in 1939. Ondine's foster parents regard her as an element of nature. She moves between the world of nature and the world of men.

Kengaku no Soshi

The act of pulling men into water is of particular interest. We can find the same motif in *Kengaku no Soshi (Hidakagawa Soshi)* in Japan.

[7] This work has been adapted by many writers such as Hans Christian Andersen (*The Little Mermaid*), Oscar Wild (*The Fisherman and His Soul*) and others.

Plate 5 An illustration by Arthur Rackham for Fouque's *Undine*.

Kengaku no Soshi is one of the Dojoji stories. They have many variations, among which is a story in *Konjaku monogatarishu (Japanese Tales from Times Past)* which influenced later books and performances such as noh – *Kanemaki* (Coiling around a temple bell) and later *Dojoji*. A variety of Dojoji stories' common key motifs are: a woman's unrequited love for an ascetic young mountain monk who consequently betrays her; her transformation into a female dragon-serpent because of her obstinate attachment and fury toward him; her murder of the monk; and as a sequel, the attainment of Buddhahood for the two.

The story *Kengaku no Soshi* has many similarities with the former series of Dojoji stories, but elements unique to *Kengaku no Soshi* are that the monk named Kengaku falls in fatal love with a maiden named Hanahime; and the serpent-transformed maiden crushes the temple's big bell in which the monk has hidden and pulls him into the depths of the river.

This version was written in the Edo Period, which may explain why he does not attain Buddhist salvation at the end of the story like he does in the earlier Dojoji versions. This story holds entertainment value among people. In the picture scroll version of Kengaku no Soshi, after jumping into the Hidaka River the maiden turns into a supernatural creature in the form of a serpent-body with a Hannya (half-woman/half-ogre)[8] head that then transforms into a dragon head.

[8] This is the influence of noh.

In the former Dojoji stories, due to the power of *Hokekyo*, after attaining Buddhahood, the maiden is reborn in "Toriten" heaven (the summit of the mountain "Shumisen"[9]), and he in "Sototsuten" heaven where the "Mirokubosatsu"[10] resides. In *Kengaku no Soshi*, however, there is no suggestion of the attainment of Buddhahood for the monk and the maiden/serpent.

The following picture (plate 6) shows the scene of Hanahime crossing the Hidaka River on whose far bank Dojoji Temple is located. To achieve this, she has to shed her human skin, i.e., taking off her clothes, and she is transformed into a full-fledged female serpent who dives into the river. At this point her human identity dies and she is reborn as a female dragon-serpent. This transformation symbolizes the shedding of serpents.

Plate 6 *Hidakagawa Soshi*, Edo Period. Watercolor on paper. Wakayama Prefectural Museum.

Hanahime's face changes to Hannya and then to the serpent/dragon. Finally there is no human element in Hanahime. Her upper part seems to be of a serpent/dragon, and her lower part the serpent. She is a creature like the Sphinx or Chimera. The following picture (plate 7) shows that Hanahime's face turns into Hannya. Its expression is filled with animosity and sadness.

Plate 7 *Hidakagawa Soshi*, Edo Period. Watercolor on paper. Wakayama Prefectural Museum.

[9] "Shumisen" is Amida's Pure Land.
[10] "Mirokubosatsu" is "Maitreya Bodhisattva."

In the following picture (plate 8), we find that Hanahime's hand holds Kengaku's neck to pull him down.

Plate 8 *Hidakagawa Soshi*, Edo Period. Watercolor on paper. Wakayama Prefectural Museum.

The Serpent

The siren/mermaid's lower body is also that of a serpent. From old times, the serpent has been considered to have supernatural magic power in many countries. It is creative as well as destructive. It is the symbol of dangerous seduction, guilefulness, artfulness, and sin. On the other hand, it has a positive side. It has to do with eternity, fertility, life, and rebirth because the serpent sheds its skin and seems to be reborn repeatedly. In Japan as well, the serpent has two phases.

The serpent is the symbol of seduction, often accompanying the femme fatale in literary works and paintings.

In Japan from around the late Heian Period onward, it was believed that women were impure and inherently evil. This evil within women was often symbolized by serpents. Usually these are hidden and repressed, but once jealousy or fury occur, the evil manifests itself in the form of terrifying serpent spirits which become all-powerful and consume the woman completely.

Lamia, Undine, and Hanahime metamorphose between the shapes of a woman and serpent.

Conclusion

The objective of my paper, which has focused on the femme fatal water-sprite narratives, has been twofold. First, to regard the water sprites as a part of nature. The water sprites have superpowers which are related to water and thus nature. Second, to explain how religions (Christianity and Buddhism) have been connected with the water sprites.

The incarnation of the serpent, like the siren and the mermaid, belongs to nature. The shape of the river is like a serpent. As we have seen, these water sprites are invincible and immortal which is associated with nature. We cannot live without water, but at the same time the water realm, like the sea and the river, become a peril in storms and floods.

In the west, in later Christian times, the sprites with their nubile femme fatale charm have been regarded as heretical monsters. The archetype of the femme fatale is identified as the Biblical Eve, who has relations with the serpent.

In Buddhism, for example, the serpent/dragon has had dichotomous significance. It has been regarded as a sacred creature as well as a monster among humans. The Dojoji stories before *Kengaku no Soshi* had taken a role as Buddhist stories. Both a woman and a man can attain Buddhahood in heaven, but the man and woman in *Kengaku no Soshi* cannot attain Buddhahood. In *Kengaku no Soshi*, the man is doomed to be drowned in the depths of the Hidaka River. There is no rescue for the man. The woman takes revenge, transforming into another entity. This story is written in the Edo Period, and the story is complex and interesting to compel readers. It has entertainment value.

Water sprites take on human shape to be loved by a mortal man. They then lure men deep into a watery kingdom without thinking that they want to kill them. In the realm of the water, human beings cannot breathe, which is definitely connected with death. The fatal water sprites, however, evoke fear and fascination at the same time. In Japan, there is a subterranean castle known as Ryugu-jo where there seems to be no suffering or death. It has been believed that Ryugu-jo is an ideal jeweled city in which there is no concept of time. It is the symbol of eternity where we can exist much like in heaven. In the west as well, the mysterious kingdom of the immortal sea creatures is thought to be under the water. Nobody knows where it is.

The theme of water sprites has been much favored and diversely treated by writers and artists through the centuries and in many countries. With the reader's imagination, the theme of water sprites is still worth examination.

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